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ABSTRACT

As a result of the overwhelming amount of print and electronic advertisements which compete for consumer attention, advertisers must find effective methods to get through the ad clutter and capture their audience's interest. Several tactics can accomplish this strategy, including the tactic of breaking or reversing audience expectations or stereotypes of electronic advertising. Nine specific approaches employ this tactic: 1) "black or white or is it color?" where some portion of a black and white ad is revealed in color; 2) imitation or parody; 3) the familiar face or aggravating person in a new role; 4) animation, watercoloration, and claymation; 5) "Australia plus special effects"; employing "Crocodile Dundee" look-alikes; 6) self-reflexive television and playing with the audience, where actors step out of character to converse with the camera/audience; 7) the inside story and fear appeals, in which the audience "eavesdrops" on corporate meetings; 8) slow motion, no sound, or mostly music; and 9) "surprise! and testimonials;" which hooks the audience through some attention-getting device, and then surprises them by revealing a secret. Similar techniques used in print advertising include 1) "black and white or is it color" and "scratched sepia"; 2) audience interaction gimmicks; 3) the familiar or aggravating figure testimonial; 4) three-dimensional "pop-outs", and 5) multi-mediated print. (Lists of ads that represent stereotype breaking in television spots and techniques for breaking stereotypes in print ads are appended.) (MM)

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Breaking Through the Advertising Clutter: A Qualitative
Analysis of Broken Stereotypes in Print and
Television Advertisements

by

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(A paper presented at the 1988 Central States Speech
Association Conference, Schaumburg, Illinois, April, 1988)

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INTRODUCTION

It is not surprising that foreign visitors to our country feel overwhelmed by our world of advertising. It is inescapable. No matter where people go or when, advertisements bombard them from right and left. In addition, the channels for transmitting these advertisements are also increasing--cable television, satellite antennae, videotapes, buyers' channels, television "auctions," and other forms of direct response television have significantly expanded the number of potential channels for an advertiser using this medium. In the face of this competition, familiar "paid for" print sources such as the newspaper, the magazine, and billboards have also not only increased in quantity but in quality and sophistication of presentation. Then there are the "free" print sources with which we are becoming all too familiar--catalogs, newsletters, shoppers, direct response mail, in-store displays, "shelf-talkers," and a variety of other "new" places to display advertisements. For example, the cases in which videotapes are rented are being marketed as advertising space for local pizza establishments, and the videotapes themselves are now

being used as advertising vehicles with t.v. spots preceeding the contents of the tape; there are even "shopping" tapes available--video catalogs, so to speak, thus creating even more options for the advertiser.

The result of this expansion of possible places or channels which can be used for advertising is a world in which we find ourselves wading through more advertising than we can possibly process--some estimate up to 5,000 ad messages per day. The effects of this escalating presence of advertisements have created what is known in the trade as "clutter," whether it be the cluttered airwaves (which promise to be even more cluttered with a move to seven and one-half second and even five second spots)¹ or whether it is our cluttered and increasing newspapers, newsletters and envelope stuffers or attachments (known as "bangtails"). Then there are the cluttered mailboxes to which we return home to each evening only to find more direct mail marketing devices than we can ever hope to consider and read. Yet this is an industry which has increased exponentially across the past ten years, reaching sales in excess of one and one quarter billion dollars per year and still growing at an annual rate of ten percent; so it is obviously working with some consumers.

Advertisers know that in the face of such stiff competition, they must make their message memorable. In other words, they need to "break through the clutter" of other ads in various media.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to present a qualitative analysis of print and television ads which attempt to get through the clutter by breaking stereotypes of advertisements which we have come to expect as viewers or readers. The reason for breaking the stereotype is, of course, to capture the viewer or reader's attention and hopefully to maintain it while presenting product benefits or product images to an attentive potential customer. In terms of television spots, this research identified nine categories of video "clutter breaking" techniques which involved some kind of reversal or breaking of a stereotype. The spots were randomly noted as they were seen as opposed to sampling from dayparts at random. The question being asked was not "How frequently and in what proportions do various stereotype reversals occur in television advertising?" but rather "What techniques of stereotype reversals are being used to break through the clutter?" In

print advertising some of the same categories were identified, and in fact many print ads are identical to frames in the television spots, thus serving as reinforcement vehicles. Many of the other print ads involved some kind of audience participation. In these print ads stereotype reversal categories were also identified. The categories do overlap with the television categories and even with one another in some cases, and further work needs to be done before a full blown content analysis could be done, but as noted above, the research question is not the frequency of use of various types but the identification of types of stereotype breaking or stereotype reversal strategies. (Note: Here a handout of the types was distributed--see Appendix A).

TECHNIQUES FOR BREAKING STEREOTYPES IN TELEVISION SPOTS

Below are the nine stereotype breaking or stereotype reversals identified in this study with several examples of each type. Undoubtedly, readers can supplement these examples from their own viewing experience. The important thing is not to develop an exhaustive list of examples but to recognize the techniques when they are being used or if

one is involved in producing advertisements, to consider employing one or another of the techniques.

"Black and White or Is It Color?"

This technique, while a recent strategy for breaking through clutter, has been so overworked that it is now almost a cliché. In the spots using this technique, the audience, which has been used to seeing the stereotypical color spot, is surprised to see a black and white spot. Thus, breaking the stereotype captures audience attention. As the ad continues, some portion of it is revealed in color, thus maintaining the interest so that product benefits or product image can be fully communicated. Some examples of this technique are:

1. The ad for Cherry Coke where the young female character is shown at the high school dance in black and white. The scene cuts to the young male character getting ready for the dance. He is also seen in black and white, but his suspenders are pink. At the dance he meets the female character and takes her to get a Cherry Coke whereupon her earrings turn pink and the Cherry Coke label is shown in pink. There are various versions of this same

spot using the same technique with slight alterations in the setting or storyline.

2. The Lone Ranger is gassing up his 4-wheel drive "Silver" vehicle with AMOCO Super Unleaded "Silver" gasoline. The setting, vehicle, Ranger and the station attendants are shown in black and white. As the Ranger drives off in his "Silver" with a hearty "Hi Ho, Silver! Away!" a red-white-and blue AMOCO charge card tumbles and swoops out to surprise the reader at the same time the familiar line from the Lone Ranger sagas is uttered--"And we never even got to thank that masked man."

3. A Michelob ad shows a party in progress with some of the characters in black and white and others are in color, prompting the viewer to ask "How do they do that?" to him or herself, thus capturing attention while the product image is conveyed--"Weekends Are Made for Michelob."

4. In a campaign spot for Robert Dole, shown in the Illinois primary we see black and white photoes from the family album showing Dole as a young farm boy, as a soldier in W.W. II, running for office, and then we cut to Dole in color working at his desk. The ad copy stresses his patriotism, his understanding of the common man and his leadership in the Senate. The screen fades to black, and

the Words "Dole for President" appear in color on the screen with the usual disclaimer.

And numerous other spots could be cited together with variations on the "black and white or is it color?" In print ads technique such as using sepia-tones with color in the ads for Calvin Klein ads for Obsession perfume featuring various combinations of male and female nudes. It is possible that by overworking this technique, advertisers may have created a stereotype of the spot or strategy. In fact, some advertisers seem to be breaking that stereotype by using mostly color with only a little black and white to capture audience attention.

The Imitation or Parody

In this technique, a well-known stereotype is parodied or imitated in order to capture audience attention prior to emphasizing product benefits or product image. Several examples follow:

1. An imitation music video is shown which features a black gunfighter shooting down various miniature "Star Wars" type spacecraft using his index finger as a "laser-pistol." When the fight is over he blows the smoke from the "barrel" of his index finger and orders a Bud Light beer.

2. Old Style beer is promoted using picture of a can of the product over which Jon Madden presents product benefits in a parody of the type of television "Chalk-Talk" which Madden uses in his NFL commentary to explain of the instant replays.

3. In a parody of a Cecil B. DeMille spectacular, we see suffering slaves and their overseers at work building a pyramid. One of the slaves falls down and then gets up and gives a heroic speech about the day when someone builds a pyramid for the good of the common person, and we see the "Power of the Pyramid" logo.

4. Cook's champagne is promoted in a black and white parody of "Mutiny on the Bounty" with the captain giving a lecture to the crew.

5. A parody of the halftime "chewing out" of the football team occurs, and one player interrupts asking "But coach, aren't we 21 points ahead?" The coach says that to win it all, you have to be ever vigilant and self critical. The sponsor--United Airlines--is then promoted as being ahead of the game and ever vigilant with what it has learned about customer service from the 35 professional and college football teams which it flies to and from games.

The Familiar Face or Aggravating Person in a New Role

In this stereotype-breaking strategy, a familiar face or an aggravating person is seen in a new role to capture audience attention. The person then uses the new role to emphasize product benefits or product advantages. Several examples follow:

1. Wilfred Brimsley is standing next to an old-fashioned kitchen stove in his long underwear and suspenders. He is frying Hillshire bacon and extolls its virtues for getting the right kind of start on the day.
2. Jacko, the toothless Australian football player and Popeye look-alike, jumps onto the screen yelling "Get the Energizer!" for good flashlight battery performance. This ad also has a print companion.
3. Robert DuVane, who often is featured as a smug and sometimes ruthless character in dramatic productions, becomes the spokesperson for Chrysler Motors.
4. Chris Evert gives a testimonial in which she claims that "tennis hasn't always been good to me" so she has to be good to herself by using her own brand of shampoo, conditioner and skin moisturizer.
5. A familiar face is cast as a farm wife who has to fill a variety of roles--seeing the kids off to the bus,

helping with barn chores and even getting down under a piece of farm machinery to repair it. While these activities are being shown, the ad copy extolls the virtue of the sponsor's product--Dual Herbicides.

6. "Fats" Piparico looks like an inflated "sock-me" doll in a parody of a "music video" performance by "The Fat Boys" while the product--Miller Light--is promoted.

Animation, Watercolormation, and Claymation

We are most familiar with these techniques because of the Clio-winning claymation for California Raisens which quickly caused numerous claymation look-alikes to be created. The claymation technique is used to capture attention so that product benefits or image can be extolled.

1. The California Raisens and imitations using claymation are all examples.

2. In watercolormation, the macho mailman is turned into a bald eagle and "flies" your mail to its destination, re-emerging as the macho mailman at the point of delivery of "U.S. Overnight Mail."

3. There are numerous uses of animation, usually with familiar figures like Garfield the Cat, Kermit the Frog, and

others. The animation is used to capture and maintain audience attention.

"Australia Plus Special Effects"

Probably because of the immense success of "Crocodile Dundee" and perhaps "The Thorn Birds," there has been a "great awakening" about Australia. This interest is used to capture audience attention and sometimes, to maintain audience attention with the use of special effects while product features and/or product name become the focus.

Examples follow:

1. A "Crocodile Dundee" look-alike is shown filling goblets of Matilda Bay wine cooler from a 5 liter box and tap container. By playing the ad upside down, the box appears to be hanging from the ceiling, while the cooler flows "up" to fill the glasses. The special "upside down" effect captures and maintains audience attention while product virtues are emphasized in the ad copy.

2. In another Matilda Bay ad, the same Dundee look-alike uses a huge bowie knife like Dundee's to split a dart in the exact bull's eye of a dart board. This is followed by a kangaroo hopping into the bar and "Dundee's" hat being tossed to the hatrack, however, it is intercepted

by a snapping crocodile. All the while product virtues are extolled.

3. In yet another Matilda Bay ad "Dundee" tosses his hat in a crowded bar, and it travels like a boomerang with a mind of its own. "Dundee" finally tosses his huge bowie knife to "pin" the rambunctious hat to the wall. By the way Matilda Bay is not made in Australia. It is an American wine cooler.

4. The "Energizer" ad featuring Jocko, the Australian football player was noted above under the Familiar Face or Aggravating Person category.

5. Qantas airlines has also capitalized on the "Crocodile Dundee" halo effect.

Self Reflexive Television and Playing with the Audience

Probably because of success of the increasing number of dramatic series and sitcoms in which the actors step out of character to converse with the camera/audience (e.g., Bruce Willis and Cybil Shepperd in "Moonlighting" and others), advertisers have appropriated this technique to capture and maintain audience attention while product features are ballyhooed.

1. "Crocodile Dundee" himself is the spokesperson for a real Australian beer--Foster's Lager--and pours himself a mug of Foster's while extolling its virtues and then becomes the control room director with the words "fade to black" as the screen goes black about 22 seconds into the spot. In the last five seconds Dundee returns now holding a empty beer mug and comments on the quality of the ale, giving us a wink and wishing us a "G'day" because we all know he used the fade to black to drink the beer--something which is not permitted on American television.

2. From overhead we see a man who is wandering about in a maze, unsuccessfully trying to escape. The camera then dollies out to reveal that the maze spells the letters "G.T.E." as that product is presented as the solution to the maze like world of computer options with the words " Gee. No G.T.E for your computer needs.

The Inside Story and Fear Appeals

In this technique we are permitted to "eavesdrop" on a corporate meeting thus getting the "inside story" of the corporations plans. Sometimes this "inside story" reveals a blunder by one of the executives which acts as a fear appeal to the viewer. Several examples of this technique are:

1. We eavesdrop on a planning meeting for Nissan.

There are all types of persons at the meeting--old and young, fat and skinny, male and female--and each describes what the "perfect automobile" means to them. Presumably all of this input is engineered into the Nissan.

2. In a series of ads for McIntosh, the existing (and presumably new) computer system is unable to do the job and the implied question or fear appeal is "Which fool made the decision to buy the inferior computer system?"

3. A similar series of ads using the fear appeal and the inside story focuses on telephone systems instead of computer systems. Again the "inside story" meeting reveals the inadequacy of the existing, and recently installed system, and the superiority of the ITT system. Again the fear appeal is in the form of the question about who recommended purchasing the inferior system. In alternate versions, the fear appeal is in the form of employee ignorance of the features of the ITT system such as "Fax" over other systems for sending information to other branches of the multinational corporation such as telex or wire.

Slow Motion, No Sound, or Mostly Music

In this clutter breaker, audience expectations are that the television spot will have audio plus video and that the audio is usually verbal or verbal with a musical background and that action will occur at normal speed. The stereotype is broken when the ad either occurs in slow motion instead of normal speed or when there is no sound used until the very end or when only music is used until the very end when the product name is mentioned or any combination of these techniques. Such ads tend to be image-oriented and usually do not discuss product benefits or features.

1. The Honda Accord is pictured in various settings while "The Warsaw Concerto" is played. The product is mentioned only at the end of the ad.

2. A male and a female hand do a slow motion "hand dance" to the background music and in the final seconds reveal that the male hand is holding a diamond necklace which he allows to slowly slip from his hand to hers. The final words emphasize product image--Diamonds by DeBeers.

3. Workers leave the factory at the end of the day in slow motion and go to a party wearing their stone-washed "American Hero" blue jeans.

Surprise! and Testimonials

These techniques for breaking through the clutter tend to "hook" the audience through some attention getting device and then surprises them by revealing some hidden secret about the characters, product or testifiers. Sometimes the techniques are combined with special effects.

1. We see a black citizen in his late thirties playing basketball with his friends at the city park's basketball court. He makes some excellent plays while the voiceover tells us that things didn't always look so bright for our lead character, Bill Denby. We are surprised to learn that Bill lost both legs in Vietnam, but thanks to Dupont Chemicals he can still play basketball. We then hear that both of his legs are made of "a remarkable Dupont plastic [that] could help make artificial limbs that are more resilient, more flexible, more like life itself. Thanks to these efforts Bill Demby is back. And some say, he hasn't lost a step."

2. A cordless electric screwdriver by Black and Decker is in its package. The voiceover tells us of some of the product benefits. We are surprised to see the screwdriver begin to move on its own, and soon it is flying all around

the house tightening screws on the vacuum cleaner the cupboard doors, etc.

3. The Smothers brothers are discussing the product benefits of Magnavox television sets. We are surprised that Tommy isn't dumb. In fact he knows all the answers to his brother's questions about the Magnavox advantages. The ad ends with Tommy telling us "I'm not really dumb--they just pay me to act that way."

4. In a series of well-done testimonials by Rumnill Hoyt agency, The Church of the Nazarene promotes its "helping others" image. The sponsor is generally left until the last frame of the storyboard/ad.

TECHNIQUES FOR BREAKING STEREOTYPES IN PRINT ADS

The method for identifying techniques for getting through the clutter in print was similar to that used in the television spot examples. That is, examples were collected at random as opposed to picking various print sources at random--the first issue of each month of several magazines, for example--and then content analyzing the clutter-breaking techniques used in each issue. The research question

focuses on identifying the existence of, not the quantity or proportion of clutter-breaking or stereotype breaking/reversing techniques. These techniques, together with several examples of each, are discussed below.

"Black and White or Is It Color?" and "Scratched Sepia"

(Note: Here a series of 35 mm slides demonstrating the techniques were shown. Following on the heels of the success of the black and white with a touch of color format on television, print advertisements soon adopted this strategy, sometimes serving as reinforcement messages to the already established broken stereotype in the televised version of the product promotion.

1. Susan Lucci, the scoundrel on "Days of our lives" is in black and white. Her testimonial quote is "I never met a Scoundrel I didn't like" We find the product--Scoundrel Perfume--pictured in color at the lower right hand corner of the page with the words "Scoundrel Musk. Unquestionably female. Undeniably provocative." Other scoundrels such as Joan Collins, the scoundrel of Dynasty, have been featured in different versions of this same black and white with a touch of color ad strategy.

2. In an ad for The Palmer House hotel, we see the black and white with a touch of color cliché being broken with an ad that features "color with a touch of black and white."

3. An even more dramatic example of color with a touch of black and white is seen in the ad for Spring Breeze underarm deoderant. Another stereotype is being broken here also with the product being depicted as a unisex product. It is "Strong enough for a man," and a man's powerful hand in black and white holds spring flowers in a tight grasp. This image serves as the background for the brightly colored female and the words ". . .but with an original fresh, clean scent for women."

4. Three well-endowed nude females are intertwined in scratched sepia tones over which the words "Obsession for Men" and "Calvin Klein" are printed in blue. A bottle of the product is also sepia with blue printing.

Audience Interaction Gimmicks

In this stereotype breaking strategy, the reader must physically interact with the ad. This interaction serves as the hook for getting and maintaining the reader's

attention. The participation takes a variety of forms as the following examples demonstrate:

1. The product name is absent from the first page of the Vantage Ultra Lights ad. The reader's curiosity is piqued by the words "Taste the Performance," which invite the reader to unfold page one. After all how do you taste performance? The page turn reveals an attractive female racing over the water in a ski-bike, while a claim is made that the product provides something that has never before been promised. An arrow directs the reader to open the flap on page 3 of the ad to learn that by calling 1-800-VANTAGE, he or she can get a free package of the product. In case the readers didn't open page one, a teaser using the words "IF YOU MISSED THE PERFORMANCE, TURN BACK TO PAGE ONE SO YOU DON'T MISS OUR OFFER." on page four to invite them to flip back.

2. A similar audience participation technique in an ad for a new advertising vehicle, taken from a recent issue of Advertising Age begins with the teaser on the first page--"The plain old Video Rental Box is no longer plain." The reader is invited to open the ad to discover why. On pages 2 and 7 (which are folded to almost appear to be pages 2 and 3, the reader discovers that ads can be put on

the video rental box by Adcorp's Videotagg to promote local restaurants, game emporiums, the lottery, etc. But because pages 2 and 7 are slightly smaller than standard size, the reader is also aware that another act of unfolding will reveal more. This unfolding reveals pages 3 through 6 which depict a family from ". . .The Affluent Video Renter Market" watching a video while daddy phones out for a pizza from Pizza World. It's so easy to do, the phone number is right there on the video rental box, put there by Videotagg. An information request business reply card is inside to identify qualified leads. It too is interactive since not only does the reader have to fill in the card requesting various options--samples, rates, coupons, research reports about the vehicle and so on, but the reader can also punch out a Rolodex reference card for his or her Rolodex file. Page 8 of the piece is a copy-heavy detailed explanation of the system, its frequency and reach potentials.

3. The 1988 Toyota Corolla is promoted through a unique audience participation device--the old fashioned stereopticon. A foldable cardboard stereopticon invites the readers to "see" the 1988 Corolla by unfolding it and looking through the lenses. There they see a 3-D picture of a Corolla with an attractive Yuppie couple inside. The

Corolla is climbing a hill in an exclusive Georgetown or San Francisco neighborhood which has at least five separate levels of depth perception. After "seeing" the Corolla in the stereopticon, the reader is presented with product features--style, comfort, performance and quality. In case the stereopticon didn't do the job, the last page of the piece invites the readers to see them at their dealers.

4. Hallmark Cards' Shoebox Greetings division include an actual greeting card on the advertising page. It is atypical of Hallmark products in that it is funny, irreverent, and even weird, as the copy explains. The readers are invited to detach the card for their own use. The back of the card reinforces the "Funny, Whacko and Witty" new product line. For the next reader of the page, a small window tells them that there should be a greeting card glued onto the page. It isn't there, and this can only mean, "... someone swiped it." Now the reader will have to go to the Hallmark store to find out what Shoebox Greeting Cards are. They must be great since someone was willing to swipe the sample.

5. In a slight twist using audience interaction gimmicks with sexual appeals and highly sophisticated photo layout and composition, Budweiser captures the audience's

attention by placing three very attractive females on a beach blank on which the Budweiser label/logo is printed. Each model's swimming suit has been printed to correspond to a separate portion of the beach blanket and they lie on it in three different positions while being photographed from above. The result is the re-formation of the Budweiser logo by exactly matching the printed parts of their suits with the printed parts of the blanket which have been obscured by their bodies. The result is that the audience completes the Bud label by interacting with the blanket and the attractive females in swimsuits weaving bodies and blanket into a single message.

The Familiar or Aggravating Figure Testimonial.

This category was almost identical to the similar category in television spots. In fact, some of the print ads are frames from the television spots. Examples follow:

1. Jocko, for Energizer, says "It'll surprise ya!" and grips the Energizer battery while grimacing at the camera or reader. Two coupons are included at the bottom of the ad to encourage audience participation.

2. Wilfred Brimsley is pictured eating a bowl of Quaker Oats Oatmeal while a headline proclaims "Another old wives'

tale confirmed by science: The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Heavy ad copy goes on to explain the health hazards of eating the wrong kind of breakfast--Hillshire bacon and eggs, for example. But eating the right kind of breakfast or Quaker Oats Oatmeal will help cut down on cholesterol and will increase one's daily intake of soluble fibre.

3. In a print ad which is similar to the television spot, Chris Evert again testifies that "Tennis hasn't been good to all of me." She goes on to explain that tennis is hard on one's hair and skin, the solution for which is regular use of "Chris Evert's Active Life" shampoos, conditioners, and skin moisturizers.

4. Donna Rice is pictured in an empty ballroom leaning against a pillar smiling at the camera while testifying, "I have no excuses. I just wear them."

Three Dimensional "Pop-outs"

In this clutter-breaking technique, the advertiser goes to great lengths and expense to create an ad which "pops out" in 3-D and frequently asks the reader to participate with the spot in some way. Examples follow:

1. Hennessy Cognac used a four page pop-out insert in major magazines. On page one we see a stocking hung by the chimney with care and the words "This Year's Christmas Gift?" Upon opening the piece to pages 2 and 3, the reader discovers that a simulated cardboard container pops out of 3-D stocking, and a simulated bottle of Hennessy Cognac, pops out of the cardboard container, thus giving four levels of depth perception to the ad. Page four of the ad has a bottle of Hennessy and two freshly filled snifters on a table top as the reader is urged "To give the great taste of Hennessy, visit your local retailer or call 1-800-CHEER UP." to have a bottle specially delivered.

2. Merit Cigarettes has a four page insert which opens on page one with the words "Breakaway. Get the flavor of these leading brands, but less tar. . ." superimposed over small black and white packs of Winston Lights, Kool Milds, Kent, Salem Lights, and Camel Filters. Upon opening to pages 2 and 3, the reader is told to "Breakaway to Merit" as the spinnaker of a sailboat pops-out to form a three dimensional image. Tucked in the sail is a coupon for a free pack of Merit or Merit Lights. Page four shows a man smoking a Merit while he stows the sail. The words

"Breakaway to Flavor" and the Merit pack are superimposed over his silhouette.²

Multi-Mediated Print

In this technique for breaking a stereotype to get through the clutter, a micro-chip which has been taught to "sing" is placed inside a four page ad insert. As the ad is opened, the songs begin to play. Two examples were identified this year, and some predict that next year the micro-chips will be more sophisticated in the near future.

1. A Canadian Mist ad for the holiday season has a green cover for page one with the words "The Spirit of the Holidays is Just Around the Corner. . . ." implying the just around the corner of the cover page. As the cover is opened to reveal pages 2 and 3, the microchip plays "Deck the Halls." The setting for pages 2 and 3 is a snow-covered mountaintop with a deer quietly standing below snow-blanketed spruce trees. The words "There's Nothing Finer Than Mist" and a bottle of Canadian Mist standing between the words "Than" and "Mist" force audience participation. Page four has a large bottle of Canadian Mist and its gift box with the headline "SHARE THE SPIRIT OF THE

HOLIDAYS" and an invitation to call a 1-800 number to have the product sent as a gift.

2. In a similar ad for Absolut Vodka, the reader sees a Christmas tree branch and Christmas tree bulb on it. The bulb has the Absolut logo on it and the words "Absolut Vodka" superimposed over the words "Country of Sweden". Below the bulb, in large type is the word "HAVE. . ." which invites the reader to open to pages 2 and 3 to find a fuller version of the tree, decorated with the same type bulbs, but which feature not only regular Absolut but Absolut Peppar while a microchip plays an entire medley of jolly Christmas songs. The words ". . .an Absolut. . ." lead the reader to page four where the word ". . .BALL." ends the sentence begun on page one--"Have an Absolut Ball."

In both the Absolut and the Canadian Mist ads with musical micro-chips, there is an interesting side note. While most persons discarded the magazines in which the ads appeared, many kept the ad, often showing it to their friends. As noted earlier, the next step is more sophistication in these micro-chip ads. In the words of Richard Lewis, Account executive for TBWA, "We're looking for an ad that can talk."³

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we are facing a world which is so crammed with various print and electronic advertisements, that it is impossible to pay attention to them all. As a result, advertisers must find ways to get through all of the ad clutter which is out there. One general strategy for getting through the clutter is to surprise the audience in order to capture their attention. Then the advertiser hopefully maintains attention while an explanation of product benefits or product image is conveyed. This paper has identified several tactics for accomplishing this strategy. One way it can be done is by breaking or reversing audience expectations or stereotypes of electronic and print advertising. Nine categories of stereotype breaking or stereotype reversals were identified for television spots, and six categories of stereotype breaking or reversal were identified for the print medium.

Undoubtedly there are other tactics which might fit under this strategy of the broken or reversed stereotype, and there are undoubtedly other strategies for getting and maintaining audience attention or "breaking through the clutter," but it is useful for both the consumers and the producers of advertising messages to be aware of the power

of breaking or reversing stereotypes. It is clear that our field has only begun to touch on the communication and persuasive strategy/tactics in the overwhelming world of advertising. It is clearly a field of inquiry which is badly in need of investigation.

APPENDIX A

STEREOTYPE BREAKING IN TELEVISION SPOTS

Black and White or Is It Color?

1. Cherry Coke
2. "Silver" Amoco/Lone Ranger
3. Michelob "Party"
4. Robert Dole For President

The Imitation or Parody

1. Bud Light "Laser Pistol" Music video
2. Old Style "Chalk Talk"
3. Cecille B. DeMille "Pyramid"
4. Cook's Champagne/"Mutiny on the Bounty"
5. "Halftime" by United Airlines

The Familiar Face or the Aggravating Person in a New Role

1. Willfred Brimsley for Hillshire bacon
2. "Jocko" for Energizer
3. Robert DuVane for Chrysler
4. "Tennis Hasn't Always Been Good to Me"
5. Farm Wife/Dual Herbicides
6. "Fats Piparico" Music Video

Animation, Watercoloration, and Claymation

1. California Raisens

2. Mail/Eagle/Mailman
3. Garfield and Kermit, etc.

Australia Plus Special Effects

1. Upside-down Matilda Bay
2. Bowie Dart
3. Boomerang Hat
4. "Jocko"
5. Qantas/Crocodile Dundee

Self Reflexive Television and Playing With the Audience

1. Foster's Lager
2. "Maze" by GTE

The Inside Story and Fear Appeals

1. Nissan's "Perfect Automobile"
2. McIntosh--Who's the dope?
3. ITT's " " " ?

Slow Motion, No sound, Only Music

1. Honda Accord/"Warsaw Concerto"
2. "Hand Dance" by DeBeers'
3. Workers' party

Surprise! and Testimonials

1. Artificial Legs--Bill Demby
2. The Flying Screwdriver
3. "Tommy's not dumb"

Techniques for Breaking Stereotypes in Print Ads

"Black and White or is it Color?" and Scratched Sepia

1. Susan Lucci and others for "Scoundrel"
2. The Palmer House
3. Spring Breeze Deoderant for Men and Women
4. Scratched Sepia and Sepia/Obsession for Men

Audience Interaction Gimmicks

1. Vantage Ultra-lights
2. Videotagg
3. Stereoptican for Toyota
4. Hallmark Cards Shoebox
5. Beach Blanket Budweiser

The Familiar Face/Aggravating Character in New Role

1. Jocko
2. Wilfred Brimsley for Quaker Oats
3. Chris Evert
4. Donna Rice/No Excuses

Three Dimensional "Pop-Outs"

1. Hennessy Cognac
2. Merit Spinnaker Coupon

Multi-media Print

1. Canadian Mist
2. Absolut Vodka

End Notes

1. "Today, with Bryant Gumbel, Jane Pauley, and Joseph White. Monday November 10, 1986. (New York: N.B.C. News, 1986) Transcript--pp. 35-38.
2. Anetta Miller, "The Escalating Ads Race." Newsweek December 7, 1987, p. 65.
3. Ibid.